

## **Listen, observe, act – in step with God** **A Service for Lady Day**

### **Welcome**

Welcome to our Mothers' Union Lady Day Service. As a movement we are seeking to listen to each other and to God, to prayerfully inform our way ahead. So we gather with thankfulness for the inspiration of Mary as she listened and responded in faith to the call of God upon her life.

### **Call to worship**

Listening, like Mary, we open our minds  
**Let us rejoice, God is with us**

Watching, like Mary, as God surprises us  
**Let us rejoice, God is with us**

Questioning, like Mary, as we engage with the world  
**Let us rejoice, God is with us**

Pledging, like Mary, to lift up the humble  
**Let us rejoice, God is with us**

*Adapted from the traditional Eastern Orthodox hymn for the Annunciation  
& Luke 1:26-28*

### **Opening hymn**

#### **Confession**

Holy God, you promise to do great things for us,  
**yet we do not trust you.**

You extend your mercy to us,  
**yet we do not trust you.**

You lift up the humble,  
you fill the hungry with good things,  
**and yet we still do not trust you.**

**Forgive us, and help us to trust  
in the promises you have given us.  
In the name of Jesus Christ we pray. Amen**

*Rev. Christine Caton*

### **Exploring the Word – a dramatised reading of Luke 1:26-38 \***

**Narrator:** In the sixth month of Elizabeth's pregnancy, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin's name was Mary.

**Gabriel:** Greetings, you who are highly favoured! The Lord is with you.

**Narrator:** Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be.

**Gabriel:** Do not be afraid, Mary, you have found favour with God. You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over Jacob's descendants for ever; his kingdom will never end.'

**Mary:** How will this be, since I am a virgin?

**Gabriel:** The Holy Spirit will come on you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God. Even Elizabeth your relative is going to have a child in her old age, and she who was said to be unable to conceive is in her sixth month. For nothing is impossible with God.

**Mary:** I am the Lord's servant. May your word to me be fulfilled.

## Talk/ Reflection

### Faith response \*

**Our souls magnify the Lord,  
and our spirits rejoice in God our Saviour,  
for he looks with favour upon us  
and sees our unrealised potential.**

In the tradition of Mary,  
and all who have said "yes" to God,  
we stand here today,  
to add our assent to theirs.

Like Mary, we feel overwhelmed;  
we wonder if we are worthy,  
or capable, of following the calling.

Like Mary, we have our questions  
and we will not be afraid to ask them.

Like Mary, we will hear and ponder  
the assurance that God will empower us.

Like Mary we will strive to say -  
"Let it be with us according to your will."

**To whatever God is inviting of us  
at this time in our lives,  
and relying on God's grace,  
we say "yes."**

*Ann Siddall; ©2018*

## **Hymn**

### **Prayers of intercession \***

*We bring our prayers of intercession in faith; with the words of Mary echoing in our hearts, that nothing is impossible with God.*

**Lord of all,  
you give us a vision through the song of Mary  
of the way the world ought to be  
and one day shall be:**

a world in which you show the strength of your arm  
and scatter the proud,  
in which you bring down the powerful  
and lift up the lowly,  
fill the hungry with good things  
and send the rich away empty;

a world of justice,  
in which good will triumph,  
evil be ended  
and the meek inherit the earth.

**Give us confidence to believe that day can come  
and the resolve to make it happen.**

Stir the hearts of your people everywhere  
to work in whatever way possible for change –  
to bring the dawn of your kingdom closer  
and so translate that vision into reality.

**Come again to your world,  
and turn tears into laughter,  
sorrow into gladness.  
In the name of Christ we ask it. Amen**

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## **Mothers' Union Prayer**

**Loving Lord  
We thank you for your love so freely given to us all.  
We pray for families around the world.**

**Bless the work of the Mothers' Union  
as we seek to share your love  
through the encouragement, strengthening  
and support of marriage and family life.  
Empowered by your Spirit,  
may we be united in prayer and worship,  
and in love and service  
reach out as your hands across the world.  
In Jesus' name. Amen**

## **Hymn**

### **Final Blessing**

Christ the Son of God, born of Mary,  
fill you with his grace  
to trust his promises and follow his will;  
and the blessing of God almighty,  
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,  
be among you and remain with you always. **Amen**

## **Notes for the service for Lady Day**

**Please use and adapt this service to suit your particular setting.  
You may wish to include the Commissioning of Diocesan Officers as part  
of the service. The updated wording for these can be found on the  
Mothers' Union website.**

### **Suggested hymns and songs:**

Tell out my soul  
Hope of our calling  
This, this is the God we adore  
From heaven you came, helpless babe  
Brother sister let me serve you  
Jesus is king and I will extol Him  
When I feel the touch of your hand upon my life  
Lord Jesus Christ, you have come to us  
God is working his purpose out  
Love divine, all loves excelling

### **Exploring the Word**

This may be shared between three readers.

### **Faith response**

If you are including the Commissioning of Diocesan Officers in the service this would fit well after the faith response.

### **Intercessions**

You may wish to include your own thanksgiving and intercessions here; also the Wave of Prayer for the day, along with your own link dioceses.